School for Housewives

by Marion Harland

Doing up Embroidered and Lace Pieces

Getting the Ironing Table Ready for Pressing

Iron on the Wrong Side over a Thick Padding

Baste the Lace Flat upon Muslin before Washing It

NO matter how carefully you use them, embroidered pieces will soil and lace pieces grow dingy, and, unless you do them up with exquisite care, become shabby and stringy with the first washing. Many a beautiful bit, for that matter, has been ruined in the pressing that follows hard on the heels of the last stitch of making it.

Anything that is embroidered with silk must never be washed in hot water, for colors have a way of fading (and even of running) and white of deepening to an unspeakable yellow. Of course, pieces embroidered with white cotton or linen thread are exempt from this law. They may be washed with no particular regard for anything except getting them exquisitely clean.

For ironing, pad your board with several thicknesses of flannel—an old blanket will do—but fold it smoothly several times. Over it lay a clean white cloth. If you pin it down, don't stretch either padding or covering, but pin smoothly, so that the top will "give" without creasing.

Lay the embroidered piece (which has been washed in a suds a little more than lukewarm, squeezed out between your palms and rinsed thoroughly in cold water) face down upon the cloth just as it comes out of the rinsing water, with the excess moisture squeezed out, but still thoroughly wet. Cover it with a bit of muslin (an old handkerchief, the bigger the better, will do), and with a warm iron literally press it, passing over the piece heavily, but as quickly as possible.

Take off the handkerchief and go over the piece with the iron, pressing lightly this time, except over possible creases and upon heavily padded bits.

If the edges are fringed brush them out with a small, stiff brush kept just for that purpose, or with one of the little flat wire brushes, which make it look almost like new. With scallops, give the edge an extra heavy pressing, to make them stand out plainly.

Be sure to iron until the piece is perfectly dry, watching out especially for the heavy heads of flowers, which, unless dried all the way through, are apt to spoil the smooth, pretty effect of the piece by making the linen around them pucker as though rough-dried.

Then lay it away, in box or drawer, somewhere where nothing can muss or crumple it. Often a bit exquisitely embroidered and exquisitely done up becomes limp and mussed before it is used. Perhaps a better way to keep it in order is to roll it around a long mailing tube, twisting it lightly in tissue paper afterward.

Lace work, as a rule, has been so unsatisfactory in the matter of laundering, coming out of the process looking like anything but its former beautiful self, that a great many enthusiasts have given up the work, rather than see it spoiled so soon.

If it is basted upon muslin or linen, and then washed while it is upon the cloth, it should come out like new. But it must be basted almost as elaborately as when the braid was first tacked upon the pattern.

Iron while it is still basted upon the cloth, using the iron quickly and lightly, and when the lace is perfectly dry, rip carefully from the cloth and press again with a warm iron.

Of course, if it is made around a linen center, the linen part must be dampened and ironed until it is dry, but the treatment of the laces is the same.

MRS. STERLING'S WAYS

MAKING CORN BREAD

No. XIV

MRS. BROWN has been attending lectures upon dietetics for some weeks past. She is one of the scores of millions who take education in the form of triturates. She handed out a tabloid to us by the time she received her first cup of tea. When the lecturer reaches "Tannic Acid," she will abjure the Chinese herb entirely. Knowledge, when triturated, is absorbed in broken doses and periodically.

"It is a pity," she moralized, stirring in the sugar before accepting cream, "that Americans persist in adding to adipose tissues and softening muscles and bone by eating white bread, from which the best elements have been removed by boiling!"

"There are graham bread sandwiches upon the other plate if you prefer them!" said Mrs. Sterling, obligingly, supposing, naturally enough, that the remark was suggested by the oblong of folded white bread inclosing a wafery slice of chicken breast and a lettuce leaf the visitor had selected.

"Thank you! This is very nice, I am sure. It is strange, as I was saying, that so few appreciate the food products of whole wheat and brown bread. Prof. Sidestep declares that it is a crime to feed children upon fine wheat bread. He says the sour black loaves that are the daily fare of European peasants would be infinitely more wholesome for us all."

"Detestable stuff!" interjected Mrs. Black, bluntly. "I was always reminded when I saw the little wretches munching them of the text, 'If they ask bread, will He give them a stone?' The loaves looked more like chunks of asphalt than food for human beings."

Mrs. Sterling came between the disputants with a tactful diversion:

"It would be well for us if we gave corn breads a more honorable place upon family bills of fare. When we consider that it is a native product we might draw the conclusion that it is especially adapted to the physical needs of people who live in America. It is nourishing, building up bone and tissues, and, being slightly laxative, is less heating than wheat, barley or oatmeal. At least," she added in modest deprecation of the possible criticism of Prof. Sidestep's disciple, "that is what I have been told."

The Difference in Corn Meals.

Mrs. Martin spoke by the card:

"Northern people know next to nothing about corn breads! I notice Mrs. Sterling uses the plural and she is right. There are half a dozen different varieties and all good—in competent hands! Here," disdainfully—"they give the preference to yellow cornmeal. We raise yellow corn at home for horses, dogs and chickens, never thinking of putting it upon the table for human Christians to eat. Then, your cooks put sweetening—sugar or molasses—into corn bread! an unheard enormity in the real home of the maize, where no meal is complete without it in some shape—pone, batter bread, johnny cake, hoe cake, or batter cakes. When I say over the list I am homesick 'for the loved food my infancy knew!'"

Her sigh and doleful countenance were irresistibly comic.

Mrs. Sterling laughed.

"Why not buy Southern cornmeal, and renew departed joys, instead of repining? For, of course, you must know what many Middle States and Northern people do not—that the meal sold by our grocers is not the same as one buys south of Mason and Dixon's traditional line. Ours is ground by steam-driven mills; yours is 'water ground' after the old style. The very shape of the particles is different in the two kinds. If you were to try to make any of the delicious breads you have named with Northern meal, your failure would be as lamentable as my attempt to compound your incomparable batter bread (oh, yes! I know it well, having eaten it in Virginia!). Using our very best brand of yellow—or of white—Indian meal. Before you tell us just how to make and to eat it, I meant you to jot down my recipe for what my John and boys have named

"'NONESUCH CORN BREAD.'

"Two heaping cups of Northern Indian meal; one cup of flour; three eggs; two and a half cups of milk; one teaspoonful of lard; two teaspoonfuls of baking powder.

"Beat the eggs very thoroughly—whites and yolks separately—melt the lard, sift the baking powder into the meal and flour while yet dry, and stir this in at the last. Then, to borrow the direction scribbled by the rattle-tongued girl upon the recipe when she sent it to me—'beat like mad!' Bake quickly and steadily in a buttered mold. Half an hour will suffice. In cutting corn bread hold the knife perpendicular and cut toward you."

"May a benighted Yankee say a word as to water-ground meal?" asked Mrs. Gray, inclining her head gracefully to the Southern matron, when the sound of scribbling pencils ceased. "It may be bought in some Northern cities, being imported directly from Virginia. Some people say there is a secret in compounding it known to the negro cook alone. An old mammy whom I saw in Florida, told me, mysteriously, that she 'always said a charm over it.' She would not tell me what it was. But I watched her one day while she made the most enchanting johnny cake that ever crisped between a mortal's teeth. I can tell you exactly how she did it—barring the unuttered 'charm.' I do not promise that yours will equal hers by many degrees. This is the formula as I wrote it down at the time:

"One teacupful of sweet milk; one teaspoonful of buttermilk; one teaspoonful of salt; one teaspoonful of soda; one tablespoonful of melted butter.

"Erough meal to enable you to roll it into a sheet half an inch thick. Spread upon a buttered tin, or in a shallow pan, and bake forty minutes. As soon as it begins to brown, baste it with a rag tied to a stick and dipped into melted butter. Repeat this five or six times until it is brown and crisp. Break—not cut it up—and eat for luncheon or tea, accompanied by sweet or butter milk."

"Now for your famous batter bread," petitioned Mrs. Greene, turning to the Virginia woman.

It was given without hesitation and run off glibly:

"Beat two eggs light; stir a cupful of cold boiled rice into a liberal pint of milk and add to the eggs, rice and milk a tablespoonful of melted butter. Sift a teaspoonful of salt into two cups of Indian meal; stir all together and bake in a pudding dish. Eat hot. Should the meal thicken too much, add more milk. I sift a teaspoonful of baking powder with the meal, but that is an innovation.

"Brands of meal differ in the matter of thickening when wet, as much as different barrels of flour. The mixture should be of the consistency of pound-cake batter, and beaten hard at the last. Some cooks scald the meal and let it cook before mixing. They say it takes off the raw taste. Then less milk is required."

Counsel to Girls.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of Heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

—Robert Herrick.

NEW JARDINIÈRES AND STANDS

Hanging Vase for Plants or Cut Flowers

Latticed with Wicker

WHEN flowers and plants that have been coddled in the house all winter are brought out of doors for the summer, the question arises how to conceal unsightly pots. Decorative jardinieres that have been used during the winter are, many of them, too costly or too fragile to be left out over night; sneak-thieves and high winds menace them. Thus there has come to be a season in jardinieres, as in everything else.

Those for the open air are very attractive, with much variety as to choice. Particularly seasonable and suitable are the rustic types. Among them are tall stands overlaid with bark, with heavy knotted base—perfectly secure in storms; or low, broad, tub-like effects on a tripod of slender tree trunks. These are often planted outright, rather than used as jardinieres, and are specially lovely when covered with trailing vines and filled with brilliant blooms.

Hanging baskets and holders for small pots, to stand on tables or porch ledge, also come in this rustic style, and are growing in popularity.

The fashion of decorating one's porch with hanging baskets, by the way, has led to many interesting novelties in what might be termed suspended jardinieres, for almost all of the new styles are intended to hold flower pots, rather than for direct planting.

Most fascinating are those in bright Japanese ware, especially the square or round Kochi jars in yellow or green, some of them decorated with figures or flowers. These imitate the well buckets used in Japan, and come in sets of two, working on a pulley. Besides being charming to look at, they do away with the necessity of climbing up to water the plants. These buckets also come in hammered brass.

Other good-looking Japanese hangers and jardinieres as well are the jars in all sizes of gay glazed and unglazed pottery in rich greens, yellow and red, covered with a lattice of brown wistaria root or bamboo. Those for hanging are also seen in cornucopia shapes, while odd octagonal or square pots, with heavy twisted handles and lace work of rattan, are most decorative for jardinieres.

Other interesting jardinieres are the large green Japanese cauldrons with many handles and solid base of bamboo, dull blue shinarikas with raised figures, antique-looking Chinese hammered brass tubs; the Oriba bowls, whose gray-green and blue leaves are particularly striking on undergrounding of beige, or those of colored bamboo reed, specially light to handle and giving good ventilation.

Jardinieres of solid colors are in favor this season, and we see big unglazed pots or round kettles on feet in dull greens, English jars in basket weaves in blue, yellow, or red, and big acorns in shaded greens and red.

The self-toned colors have not, however, entirely crowded from favor the jars of blended browns and yellows with hugh floral designs.

The jardinieres with pedestals to match are no longer in vogue; instead, we see them set either on tables or on specially devised low stools or tabourets. These come in every height and shape, round or square, and are made up in bamboo, weathered oak or burnt woods. They are very substantial and difficult to upset.

For use in the garden, to flank the porch steps, on gate posts and terraces nothing is more fascinating than the terra cotta vases and flower pots in coppery reds, beige, gray or cream. In addition to being weather-proof, these are in their shapes really artistic. Most of them are close copies of antique urns and world-famed vases, and we have fine examples of Assyrian, Grecian, Pompeiian, Egyptian, Italian, and early English forms, many of them elaborately carved.

Though the terra cotta is chiefly seen in large urn and globe shaped vases, for palms, rubber plants, bay trees, and other big specimens, it is by no means confined to this use, but is seen in interesting little flower pots and jardinieres for porch decoration.

HOUSEMOTHERS' EXCHANGE

Saccharine Instead of Sugar.

IF your correspondent, "M. C.," will teach me how to furnish my room on $4 per week for three persons, she will earn my sincere gratitude. She kindly offers her help to any one who will write to her, inclosing stamps, and I wish to avail myself of her generous offer.

Please tell "M. H."—victim of dyspepsia—that a member of my family used saccharine for many months in place of sugar with very gratifying results. To sweeten berries, rice or puddings, dissolve a tablet in the cream which you use to pour over the fruits, rice or pudding. A tablet may be dissolved in vinegar if you desire sweetness on lettuce or sliced tomatoes.

One tablet will sweeten a cup of coffee without stirring, and will be sufficient for a second cup with stirring.

Eat bread at least one day old, but cold—not warmed over. MAC.

A Hard White Home-Made Soap—Cold Process.

(By special request.)

I save all beef drippings and that which fries out of bacon and sausage for cooking purposes. These are kept in separate crocks. All fat for which I have no other use goes into the soap grease. Into an old coffee pot (kept for this purpose) go all the fat scraps left from the table, trimmings from chops, cakes of fat lifted from broths and soups, ham rinds, skimmings from boiled ham, salad oil gone rancid; in fact, any fat which would be otherwise thrown out. The "coffee pot" is placed in the oven over night, or at any time when the oven is warm or moderate, and the fat allowed to melt out very slowly. The melted fat is poured off into quart tomato cans kept for this purpose. When one can is full it is set aside, and I begin on another. When I have four cans of grease I proceed as follows:

Four quarts of soap grease are placed over the fire and melted, then strained through cheesecloth into an old water pail and allowed to cool until just warm to the hand. Into a stone crock or pitche; put five pints of cold water; add two boxes of patent lye; stir until dissolved. This is best done out of doors, as the dust which flies when you empty the lye is very penetrating. The lye causes the water to become hot, and the mixture must stand until just about blood-warm. Have ready a wooden soap box, lined first with several thicknesses of newspapers, and then with muslin.

Use two rounded tablespoonfuls of sifted borax (powdered).

When the lye is just blood warm and the grease pleasantly warm to the fingers, slowly pour the lye into the grease, stirring constantly, and slowly sift in the powdered borax, stirring slowly and evenly until the mixture begins to thicken. This is the only "ticklish" point in the whole operation. The mixture must not be stirred too long, or it will "separate" or "curdle." It should be about like rich cream, or, rather, like a pancake batter in looks and consistency. Pour off into the lined mold, cover and set away for a day or two in a warm place.

Then turn out of the mold and cut it up into bars, piling them up in a warm place, criss-cross fashion, so that the soap can dry out and ripen. The longer it is kept, the better. It will dry out hard and creamy white, not unlike white castile soap.

EXPERIENCE (Illinois).